

Message Text

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P 160120Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7705

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 TOKYO 3871

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DEPARTMENT DISTRIBUTE ONLY TO DEPUTY SECRETARY, SEIDMAN AT
WHITE HOUSE, AND WOLFF AT STR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD JA

SUBJ: DISCUSSION ON SPECIALTY STEEL

BEGIN SUMMARY. AMBASSADOR DENT PRESENTED PROVISIONS OF
PLANNED PRESIDENTIAL DECISION ON SPECIALTY STEEL TO JAPANESE
FONMIN AND MITI OFFICIALS ON MARCH 15. HE EMPHASIZED THAT A
JOINTLY NEGOTIATED OMA FOR THREE YEARS IS BEST WAY MEET
NEEDS OF U.S. INDUSTRY WHILE GIVING MOST FAVORABLE POSSIBLE
CONSIDERATION TO JAPANESE. YOSHINO IN FONMIN TOOK POSITIVE
ATTITUDE AND RECOGNIZED THAT OMA TALKS WOULD BE BEST ROUTE
FOR JAPAN BUT SAID THAT OBJECTIONS AT MITI WOULD BE HARD
TO OVERCOME. MITI OFFICIALS STATED THAT THEY FELT AN OMA
WOULD BE CONTRARY TO GATT, THAT THEY WERE CONCERNED THAT
ITC RECOMMENDATIONS DISCRIMINATED AGAINST JAPAN FOR WHICH
COMPENSATION WOULD BE DUE, AND THAT AN OMA WOULD SET A
BAD PRECEDENT FOR OTHER SECTORS OF TRADE. MITI OFFICIALS
RESPONDED THAT THEY WOULD DECIDE SOON ON WHETHER TO JOIN
OMA TALKS, BUT IN ANY EVENT THEY PREFER A NEGOTIATED
SOLUTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GATT TO UNILATERAL U.S.
ACTION. END SUMMARY.

1. AMBASSADOR DENT, ACCOMPANIED BY DEP ASSISTANT
SECRETARY GLITMAN, EMIN AND ECON COUNS FROM EMBASSY,
DISCUSSED PENDING PRESIDENTIAL ANNOUNCEMENT ON SPECIALTY
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STEEL WITH DEPUTY VICE MINISTER YOSHINO AND OTHER

FOREIGN MINISTRY REPS IN YOSHINO'S OFFICE ON MARCH 15.

2. DENT EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD COME TO JAPAN ON SHORT NOTICE AT THE PRESIDENT'S DIRECTION FOR PRELIMINARY TALKS ON SPECIALTY STEEL. HE CAUTIONED THAT HIS REMARKS WERE FOR YOSHINO ONLY AND THAT THE SUBJECT SHOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED WITH THE PRESS OR IN CABLES TO WASHINGTON BEFORE THE PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT. HE ADDED THAT DEPUTY STR YEUTTER WAS UNDERTAKING SIMILAR CONSULTATIONS IN STOCKHOLM AND BRUSSELS.

3. AMBASSADOR DENT EXPLAINED THAT, ALTHOUGH SPECIALTY STEEL MAKES UP A VERY SMALL PART OF OUR TOTAL IMPORTS OF ALL KINDS OF STEEL, AS WELL AS OF OUR IMPORTS FROM JAPAN, IT IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE OF ITS RELATIONSHIP TO NATIONAL SECURITY AND ENERGY PROGRAMS. HE SAID THAT U.S. PRODUCTION OF SPECIALTY STEEL IS NOW ONLY ABOUT 50-55 PERCENT OF TOTAL CAPACITY, WHEREAS THE CARBON STEEL INDUSTRY HAS BEEN MUCH LESS HARD HIT BY THE RECESSION AND HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO RECOVER. HE EMPHASIZED THAT WE FEEL THAT A STRONG CASE FOR INJURY EXISTS AND THE MOST RECENT DATA AVAILABLE INDICATES THAT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE U.S. ECONOMY HAVE NOT BEEN FELT BY THE SPECIALTY STEEL INDUSTRY.

4. DENT REITERATED THE POSITION TAKEN BY THE PRESIDENT AT RAMBOUILLET IN SUPPORT OF FREER TRADE, BUT WITH THE PROVISIO THAT CERTAIN SECTORS WOULD SOMETIMES REQUIRE ASSISTANCE. IN RECOGNITION OF THIS POSITION WE WERE WORKING TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE SPECIALTY STEEL PROBLEM. DENT NOTED THAT THE ACTION RECOMMENDED BY THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION WOULD CALL FOR QUOTAS FOR A PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS, AND THESE MIGHT BE EXTENDED FOR THREE MORE YEARS. THE ORDERLY MARKETING ARRANGEMENTS (OMA), WHICH THE PRESIDENT INTENDED TO PROPOSE, WOULD BE PUT INTO EFFECT INITIALLY FOR THREE YEARS AND, IF THE U.S. ECONOMY AND INDUSTRY RECOVERED SATISFACTORILY, THESE SPECIAL MEASURES MIGHT BE CURTAILED.

5. DENT EXPLAINED THAT THE U.S. INDUSTRY RESPONDED TO
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THE RECESSION BY REDUCING PRODUCTION AND LAYING OFF WORKERS. OTHER COUNTRIES PURSUED CONTINUOUS LIFETIME EMPLOYMENT POLICY AND THEIR INDUSTRIES BUILD UP LARGE INVENTORIES. WE COULD NOT ALLOW IMPORTS FROM THESE STOCKS TO SKYROCKET AS THE U.S. ECONOMY RECOVERS AND CONSUMPTION INCREASES BECAUSE THIS WOULD CONTINUE THE DAMAGE TO THE U.S. INDUSTRY. THEREFORE, THE BEST WAY TO WORK OUT ARRANGEMENTS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF BOTH

SIDES WOULD BE TO NEGOTIATE OMAS. WE THEREFORE HOPE THE GOJ CAN SOON ACCEPT OUR INVITATION TO JOIN OMA TALKS AND, AS A MINIMUM, CAN AVOID A NEGATIVE REACTION TO THE PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON SPECIALTY STEEL. SUCH A REACTION WOULD LIKELY PROVOKE THE CONGRESS TO USE ITS AUTHORITY TO OVERRIDE THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION AND PUT THE ITC RECOMMENDATION INTO EFFECT IMMEDIATELY. WE WOULD MUCH PREFER TO OPEN TALKS ON AN OMA WITH THE INTENTION OF COMPLETING THEM BY MAY 20, ALLOWING TIME FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY JUNE 16. IF THE U.S. ECONOMIC RECOVERY CONTINUES AS WE EXPECT, IT IS PROBABLE THAT THE U.S. CONGRESS WOULD BE SATISFIED AND THE DANGER OF AN OVERRIDE WOULD PASS. A NEGOTIATED OMA WOULD HAVE TO MEET THE MINIMUM NEEDS OF THE U.S. SPECIALTY STEEL INDUSTRY, BUT COULD ALSO BE BETTER FOR JAPAN THAN THE ITC RECOMMENDATION.

6. YOSHINO, SPEAKING PERSONALLY AND WITHOUT STATING AN OFFICIAL POSITION, OBSERVED THAT IT WAS UNFORTUNATE THAT THIS CASE SHOULD ARISE NOW WHEN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY IS IMPROVV AND WHEN WE MIGHT SOON SEE AN AUTOMATIC CORRECTION IN SPECIALTY STEEL TRADE. HE SAID THE GOJ IS CONCERNED THAT SPECIALTY STEEL OMAS MIGHT SPREAD TO OTHER SECTORS IN WORLD TRADE. ALSO, A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD FOR QUOTAS PER THE ITC RECOMMENDATION IS MUCH TOO LONG.

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7. B DENT SAID THAT HE FELT THE OMA CONCEPT WOULD NOT

SPREAD TO CARBON STEEL OR OTHER SECTORS. THE U.S. SPECIALTY STEEL INDUSTRY IS BASICALLY COMPETITIVE; ITS PRESENT PROBLEM IS CAUSED BY DIFFERENT NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT POLICIES AND WE HOPE THIS CAN BE CORRECTED IN THREE YEARS OR LESS.

8. YOSHINO ASKED IF SWEDEN AND THE EC WOULD AGREE TO OMA NEGOTIATIONS. DENT ANSWERED THAT DEPUTY STR YEUTTER WAS EVEN THEN TALKING TO OFFICIALS IN STOCKHOLM AND BRUSSELS AND, IF THEY CONSIDER CAREFULLY, THEY WILL UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS IN THEIR INTEREST TO AGREE. YOSHINO ASKED IF THE OMA TALKS MIGHT INTERFERE WITH THE MTNS AND WERE IN ACCORDANCE WITH GATT PRINCIPLES. YOSHINO INQUIRED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF OMAS WERE NOT NEGOTIATED AND WHETHER COMPENSATION WOULD BE GRANTED TO JAPAN. DENT SAID THAT IF WE DID NOT CONCLUDE OMAS COVERING A SIGNIFICANT PART OF IMPORTS THE PRESIDENT WOULD HAVE TO ACT UNILATERALLY TO IMPOSE QUOTAS. IF DUE TO JAPAN, DENT SAID, THEN COMPENSATION WOULD BE IN ORDER BUT THE IMPACT ON TOTAL SPECIALTY STEEL WOULD PROBABLY BE SMALL; THEREFORE, COMPENSATION WOULD BE SMALL.

9. SAITO, DIR. OF 2ND NO AM DIVISION, ASKED IF THE PRESIDENT WOULD ACT UNILATERALLY ONLY IF THE EFFORT TO CONCLUDE OMAS FAILED, AND WHETHER AN OMA WERE A CONFIDENTIAL

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WAY FOR JAPAN TO IMPROVE ITS SITUATION COMPARED TO THE ITC RECOMMENDATIONS. DENT ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY TO BOTH POINTS. GATTDIV DIR HAYASHI ASKED HOW WE COULD ALLOW JAPAN A LARGER QUOTA SINCE OTHER SUPPLIERS WOULD ALSO SEEK MAXIMUM ALLOTMENTS. DENT EXPLAINED THAT SOME SUPPLIERS HAD LIMITED EXPORT CAPACITY AND THAT PART OF THEIR SHARES MIGHT BE REALLOCATED. SIATO ASKED IF TOTAL QUOTAS WOULD RISE UNDER A STRUCTURE OF OMAS. DENT SAID THAT THEY COULD NOT GO UP MORE THAN A BIT, AND GLITMAN AFFIRMED THAT ANY SUCH CHANGE WOULD BE SMALL IN ANY EVENT.

10. DENT DISCUSSED WITH YOSHINO OUTLINES OF DRAFT PRESIDENTIAL ANNOUNCEMENT ON SPECIALTY STEEL AND, AFTER SOME DISCUSSION, THE JAPANESE SIDE INDICATED THAT IT PRESENTED NO PROBLEMS. IT WAS AGREED THAT THE PRESS WOULD BE INFORMED THAT AMBASSADOR DENT HAD COME TO JAPAN FOR A DISCUSSION OF TRADE MATTERS, BUT THAT FURTHER DETAILS WOULD NOT BE RELEASED. THE MEETING CONCLUDED AFTER AN HOUR AND TEN MINUTES.

11. AT 1400 DENT AND AMBASSADOR HODGSON CALLED ON

ITI MINISTER KOMOTO. OTHER U.S. PARTICIPANTS WERE THE SAME AS IN THE MEETING WITH YOSHINO. IN ADDITION TO KOMOTO THERE WERE, ON THE JAPANESE SIDE, VICE MIN KOMATSU, TRADE POL DIV GENERAL HASHIMOTO, TRADE ADMIN DIR GENERAL KISHIDA, BASIC INDUSTRY DIR GENERAL YANO, TRADE POLICY DEP DIR GENERAL YOSHIKAWA, AND A DOZEN OR SO OTHERS. HODGSON OPENED THE MEETING FOR THE U.S. SIDE.

12. DENT'S PRESENTATION WAS THE SAME IN ITS ESSENTIALS AS THE ONE GIVEN YOSHINO. DENT EMPHASIZED THE EVIDENCE OF INJURY TO THE U.S. INDUSTRY, NOTING ESPECIALLY THAT SPECIALTY STEEL PRODUCTION IN THE NOVEMBER 75-JANUARY 76 QUARTER IS STILL 45 PERCENT BELOW FULL CAPACITY, ALTHOUGH CARBON STEEL PRODUCTION IS RECOVERING. SPECIALTY STEEL IMPORTS ROSE IN 1975 OVER 74 PERCENT AND WERE UP A BIT IN THE NOVEMBER-JANUARY QUARTER. DENT AFFIRMED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD SUPPORTED LIBERAL TRADE POLICIES AT RAMBOUILLET. WITH THAT IN MIND DENT
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SAID THAT WE WANT TO WORK OUT WITH JAPAN AND OTHER SUPPLIERS THE BEST POSSIBLE ORDERLY MARKETING ARRANGEMENT FOR SPECIALTY STEEL.

13. KOMOTO, SPEAKING THROUGH AN INTERPRETER, EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR OUR SUPPORT OF RAMBOUILLET AND NOTED THAT, ALTHOUGH 1975 HAD BEEN A BAD YEAR FOR THE WORLD ECONOMY, 1976 SHOULD BE BETTER. HE SAID THAT THERE WERE QUESTIONS ON THE DATA IN THE ITC DECISION ON SPECIALTY STEEL WHICH OTHERS WOULD RAISE LATER. AS TO THE INVITATION FOR OMA TALKS, KOMOTO SAID THAT THERE WAS "LITTLE CHANCE" OF JAPAN AGREEING. HE FELT IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO WORK SOMETHING OUT UNDER THE GATT, BUT DENT'S PROPOSAL WOULD BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED WITH OTHER IMINISTRIES BEFORE A DECISION IS MADE. KOMOTO THEN LEFT THE MEETING, TURNING OVER HIS PLACE TO KOMATSU.

14. DENT CLARIFIED THAT HE DID NOT EXPECT AN ANSWER FROM THE GOJ IMMEDIATELY. A REASONABLE ANSWER WAS MORE IMPORTANT AND, GIVEN THE FLEXIBILITY OF OMAS, OFFERED THE BEST MEANS OF PRECLUDING AN OVERRIDING DECISION BY CONGRESS TO IMPLEMENT THE ITC RECOMMENDATION. KOMATSU, ON BEHALF OF THE MINISTER, SAID THAT UNILATERAL U.S. ACTION IS NOT DESIRABLE AND, ALTHOUGH THE GOJ DOUBTS THAT INJURY IS NOW PROVABLE, IF THERE IS INJURY A REMEDY CAN BE DISCUSSED UNDER THE GATT. GATT PRINCIPLES OF NON-DISCRIMINATION MUST BE UPHELD. JAPAN IS ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT STIMULATING OTHER

PROTECTIONIST MOVES, AND REGARDS SPECIALTY STEEL AS
A SPECIAL CASE WHICH SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO SET A
BAD PRECEDENT.

15. DENT ANSWERED THAT UNEMPLOYMENT STILL AMOUNTED
TO 40 PERCENT IN THE SPECIALTY STEEL INDUSTRY, AND
THOSE WORKERS ARE BEING INJURED. WE AGREE, DENT SAID,
TO THE SANCTITY OF GATT PRINCIPLES AND THEREFORE WE WANT
TO SIT DOWN AND WORK OUT AN OMA ON SPECIALTY STEEL.
THE PRESIDENT'S BASIC ATTITUDE IS CLEAR FROM THE FACT
THAT HE WANTS TO ANNOUNCE A THREE-YEAR PROGRAM WHICH
WILL BE SHORTENED IF POSSIBLE, AND NOT THE FIVE-YEAR
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PROGRAM FAVORED BY THE ITC.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L FINAL SECTION OF 3 TOKYO 3871

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16. KOMATSU SAID HE APPRECIATED THE PRESIDENT'S

ATTITUDE FAVORING LIBERAL TRADE AND THAT JAPAN WOULD
LIKE TO COOPERATE. HE ADDED IN JEST THAT JAPAN HAD
TAKEN THREE YEARS TO AGREE TO TEXTILE QUOTAS, BUT
THIS TIME JAPAN WOULD MOVE MORE QUICKLY. THERE FOLLOWED
A DISCUSSION OF WHAT TO TELL THE PRESS, AND IT WAS
AGREED THAT WE WOULD LIST SPECIALTY STEEL AS ONE OF
THREE OR FOUR TOPICS RAISED. KOMATSU THEN LEFT FOR A

PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED PRESS BRIEFING.

17. HASHIMOTO THEN SAID THAT GOJ POSITION IS THAT ANY OMA WOULD BE CONTRARY TO GATT. HE DID NOT THINK EITHER SIDE SHOULD BYPASS THE ATT. THE GOJ ALSO OPPOSES ALL DISCRIMINATION IN TRADE AND WILL SEEK COMPENSATION OR TAKE COUNTERMEASURES FOR ANY IMPAIRMENT OF TRADE INTERESTS. FINALLY, HE SAID, JAPAN IS CONCERNED ABOUT ANY SPILLOVER INTO OTHER TRADE CATEGORIES. HE THEN CITED THE ITC RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH, HE SAID, WORKED VERY UNFAVORABLY FOR JAPAN. ALSO THE ITC HAD STATED THAT IMPORTS WERE THE CAUSE OF INJURY BUT HAD NOT PROVEN IT.

18. GLITMAN ANSWERED BY SAYING THAT THE GATT DOES NOT PROHIBIT OMAS AGREED TO FREELY BY TWO OR MORE GATT MEMBERS. THEY ARE ONE WAY TO ESTABLISH IMPORT QUOTAS WHICH MAY BE APPROPRIATE AND ARE MENTIONED AS POSSIBLE IN GATT ARTICLE XII. GLITMAN STATED THAT WE CONFIDENTIAL

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ALSO OPPOSE ANY KIND OF DISCRIMINATION AND THAT AVOIDING IT IS ONE REASON FOR CONCLUDING AN OMA. COMPENSATION, IF DUE, IS ALSO A SUBJECT WHICH CAN BE COVERED IN ANY OMA.

19. THE MEETING ENDED AT 1600. AS THE GROUP BROKE UP SOME OF THE JAPANESE AGAIN ASSERTED THE IMPORTANCE TO THEM OF MAKING ANY ARRANGEMENT ON SPECIALTY STEEL UNDER GATT, BUT THEY SEEMED TO HAVE SOME FLEXIBILITY ABOUT HOW THAT COULD BE DONE PROCEDURALLY.

20. EMBASSY COMMENT: THE DISCUSSIONS WITH YOSHINO WENT VERY SMOOTHLY AND IT WAS CLEAR THAT HE RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE TO US OF SOLVING THE SPECIALTY STEEL PROBLEM. HE SEEMED TO ACCEPT OUR APPROACH AND DID ALL HE COULD TO PREPARE OUR REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE OBJECTIONS WHICH MITI WOULD RAISE.

21. THE TALKS WITH MITI WERE COOL, THOUGH PERHAPS NOT SO COOL AS THE FOREGOING SUMMARY SUGGESTS. KOMOTO SPOKE FROM BRIEFING PAPERS AND SEEMED TO BE LIMITING HIS INVOLVEMENT. KOMATSU FULLY GRASPED THE SITUATION AND DID NOT WANT TO RULE OUT AN OMA, BUT MAY HAVE WANTED US TO ACCEPT THEIR WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER ONE AS A SIGNIFICANT CONCESSION. HASHIMOTO ADHERED STRICTLY TO MITI'S ESTABLISHED POSITION.

22. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT JAPANESE WILL URGE THAT OMAS ON SPECIALTY STEEL, IF NEGOTIATED, BE SUB-

MITTED FOR SOME SORT OF GATT REVIEW. IF THAT CAN
BE DONE PROCEDURAL NEEDS IMPORTANT TO THEM WILL BE
MET. AS TO SUBSTANCE, WE BELIEVE THAT THEY UNDER-
STAND THAT AN OMA WOULD BE LESS ONEROUS FOR THEM
THAN UNILATERAL U.S. ACTION, AND KOMATSU, WHO PROBABLY
IS THE KEY DECISIONMAKER ON THIS ISSUE, CLEARLY PREFERS
TALKS AND A JOINT SOLUTION. HOWEVER, OTHER MITI
OFFICIALS SEEM TO PREFER TO HAVE US "VIOLATE GATT"
AND EVER AFTER HAVE TO ANSWER FOR IT.

23. THIS MESSAGE NOT CLEARED BY DENT OR GLITMAN.
HODGSON
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